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THE NEW YEAR.

Hoary old Time, with his wrinkled hands, has gathered in an other year to swell the record of the past. Another year with its sorrows and pleasures, its joys and woes, its good and its evil, gone forever. Happy or miserable, well-spent or ill-spent, thrown into the scales of our good angel, or seized with diabolical delight by our bad angel, it is registered for or against us forever, to be spread before our eyes on the last day with all the other years which have gone to make up our earthly existence.

To the young, it goes by almost unnoticed and unlamented, but the old watch its dying throes with sad hearts, because so few are left them. And yet before the sun goes down on the last day of this new year, many of the young and happy who so joyously welcomed its coming, may see its end only in eternity. For each year, as it runs its allotted course, snaps the thread of many a life, not only the worn-out thread of old age, but the strong, vigorous one of youth. Nor does it pause to choose the good who are ripe for heaven, or the sad and weary who are ready and willing to lay down their life's burden, but more frequently cuts off the wicked in their sins, and the happy to whom life is so dear.

Its winter, and summer suns will rise and set over new-made graves, its winter snows will cover some, its spring flowers bloom over others. Some lives it will claim when the earth is cold, and bleak, and dreary; others when it is warm, and bright, and fair.

"None can tell what a year may bring forth." No; for it guards its secrets carefully. We know how it finds us when it is born of its dark mother, midnight, but we do not know how it will leave us at the dark hour of its death. It may find us happy, it may leave us broken-hearted; we may see its beginning, we may never see its end. Ah! what poor, helpless creatures we are when we dare not claim one short, fleeting year. Nay, a month, a week, even a day of that year, when we cannot tell what its days and weeks and months may do for us.

Friends wish us a "Happy New Year," but those wishes are not always fulfilled; for the new-born year brings a store of sorrows, as well as joys, and a large share may be for us; and loth as we are to accept it, rebellious as we may be at its infliction, we are, nevertheless, powerless to avoid it. But we have one free, untrammelled choice, that is, to spend the new year worthily or unworthily. It rests with us alone whether we can congratulate ourselves at its close, that it has not been wasted, but turned to good account; that when it is laid bare, at the last day, before the eyes of the world, we will not blush for it, or tremble for it before the eyes of our Judge, or to look back over its misspent weeks and months in vain for one redeeming action, to know it has left us further action, to know it has left us further from heaven, nearer to eternal misery—that each recorded moment of it stands for our confusion, our condemnation. And it is gone forever; we could not purchase with our lives one wasted or sinful moment of it.